

# Musconetcong River Restoration Project Finesville Area


## Public Scoping Meeting

December 2, 2008

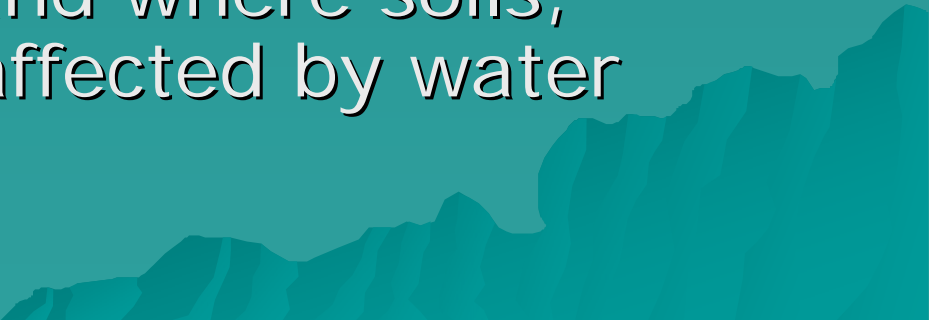
Bloomsbury, NJ

A stylized, dark teal silhouette of a mountain range is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, extending from the right edge towards the center.

# Common Terms

- ◆ **NRCS** – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
  - ◆ **NEPA** – National Environmental Policy Act
  - ◆ **EA** – Environmental Assessment
  - ◆ **Scoping** - Process of identifying Public/Agency issues to help focus analysis
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# Common Terms Continued

- ◆ **Lead Agency**- Primary Federal Agency preparing the EA (NRCS)
  - ◆ **Cooperating Agency**- Agency that assists the lead agency
  - ◆ **Watershed** – common drainage area to a stream or river
  - ◆ **T&E species** – Threatened or Endangered animals or plants
  - ◆ **Riparian** – area of land where soils, vegetation, geology affected by water
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# Role of NRCS

- ◆ Science-based, non-regulatory agency
- ◆ Involved as a result of an application for WHIP funds by Watershed Assoc.
- ◆ Federal actions such as federal financial assistance require NEPA compliance
- ◆ NRCS does not assume ownership
- ◆ Selected alternative (decision) to be funded rests with NRCS

# NEPA Process

- ◆ Environmental **planning** and **review** process
- ◆ **Public** input and involvement
- ◆ **Need** for action
- ◆ **Scoping** to identify public/agency issues and focus analysis

# NEPA Documentation

- ◆ EA document
  - Data gathering – existing baseline condition
  - Identification of potential solutions/alternatives
  - Identification of effects of alternatives
  - Agency Preferred Alternative/Solution
- ◆ Draft document will be made available to the public

# Meeting Purpose

- ◆ Public Scoping Meeting on Restoration Options for Finesville Dam
  - Provide Information
  - Listen to your issues and concerns
- ◆ NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) Funds for Project
- ◆ Federal funds trigger environmental review requirements under NEPA

# Scope of EA Analysis

Primary Focus: Alternatives for **Finesville Dam**

- ◆ NRCS Federal control and responsibility tied to WHIP funding on this site
- ◆ Other dam sites and generic options/alternatives for those sites potentially evaluated from an indirect and cumulative effects standpoint
  - Indirect Effects - effects later in time
  - Cumulative Effects – consideration of total combined effects of the proposed action at Finesville dam and future potential actions at other dam(s)



# Underlying Need for Action

## Musconetcong River Restoration Project

Primary need is two-fold:

- ◆ Aging dams present public health and safety issues
  - Do not currently meet State Dam Safety requirements
  - Potential liability issues for owners
- ◆ Aquatic ecosystems adversely impacted
  - Connectivity of river system
  - Fish and wildlife habitat



◆ Gruendyke Dam Removal






## ◆ Roger Cornell Interview - Gruendyke Dam Removal

# Objectives

## Musconetcong River Restoration Project

Restoration of:

- ◆ Natural hydrology and hydraulics
  - ◆ Sediment movement
  - ◆ Nutrient cycling
  - ◆ Fish and wildlife habitat
  - ◆ Native plant populations and riparian forest buffers
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# Dam Locations on Lower Musconetcong River









Finesville Dam

# Issues Identified for Evaluation in EA


- ◆ No current economic use of Finesville dam
  - ◆ Private dam owner liability
  - ◆ Public safety – life lost in August 2003
  - ◆ Recreational use
  - ◆ Historic significance
  - ◆ Aesthetics
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# Issues Identified for Evaluation in EA Continued

- ◆ Habitat for migratory fish such as American eel impacted by dams
  - ◆ Native brook trout and other native species spawn in River and its tributaries
  - ◆ Dams limit natural fish movement
  - ◆ Others? – Need public input
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# Alternatives Analysis

- ◆ No Action
  - ◆ Fish Passage Improvement
  - ◆ Dam Modification
  - ◆ Dam Removal
  - ◆ Others? - Public Input
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◆ Finesville Dam - Existing View





◆ Finesville Dam - Simulation of Denil Fish Ladder





◆ Finesville Dam - Simulated View of Concrete Dam





◆ Finesville Dam - Simulation of Dam Breach






◆ Finesville Dam - Existing View - before removal





◆ Finesville Dam - Simulation of Dam Removal

# Example Practices

- ◆ Tree/shrub establishment
  - ◆ Stream channel stabilization
  - ◆ Fish passage improvement
  - ◆ Stream habitat improvement
  - ◆ Streambank protection
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◆ Pools and Riffles for Fish Passage Improvement





◆ Stream Channel Stabilization - Riparian Plantings





◆ Soil-Bioengineering



## ◆ Harry Pursel Interview - Pursel Mill Dam Breach





◆ Pursel Mill Dam in 2006





◆ Purses Mill Dam Breach

# Future Public Input

At the **Draft EA** Phase (Spring 2009)

- ◆ Public meeting and opportunity to comment
- ◆ Draft EA available for public review for 30 days once prepared
  - Notice of the Draft EA's availability published in the local newspaper
  - May also be automatically sent to you by indicating at today's meeting you would like to remain on the mailing list for future information on this project
- ◆ Written comments on the Draft EA may be sent via letter, email, or fax

# Public Input Now

At the **Scoping** Phase

- ◆ Verbal and written comments provided at today's meeting
- ◆ Written comments by letter, email
  - Due by **January 30, 2009** to:  
Barbara Phillips  
USDA NRCS  
220 Davidson Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Somerset, NJ 08873 or  
[barbara.phillips@nj.usda.gov](mailto:barbara.phillips@nj.usda.gov)